(d) and (e) To some extent accumulation of outstanding payments from clients has affected the financial health of the company resulting from higher overdraft from banks to meet the working capital requirements. The total outstanding amount as on 31-10-2001 is Rs. 120 crores out of which Rs. 75.4 crores is outstanding for more than one year.

(f) No such proposal for revival of MECON is under consideration of the Government.

US Taxes on Indian Steel Imports

†2111. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the US Government has imposed heavy taxes to discourage import of Indian steel in that country;

(b) if so, the facts in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this step of the US Government would make export of steel from India to America impossible; and

(d) if so, the Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) and (b) The US Government in the recent past has imposed anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties against import of steel from various countries including India. The US DOC has initiated anti dumping and anti subsidy proceedings against the import of a number of steel and related products from India viz., CTL Carbon Steel Plates, HR Steel Flat Products and CR Steel Products. It has imposed anti-dumping duty of 72.49% and countervailing duty of 12.82% on CTL carbon plates and anti dumping duty between 29.35% to 43.07% and countervailing duty between 8.32% to 31.94% on HR steel flat products.

(c) Yes,Sir.

(d) The Government has been supporting the cause of Indian exporters. On US Department of Commerce imposing anti-dumping duty of 72.49% on cut-to-length carbon steel plate imports from India, the Indian Government approached the Dispute Settlement Body of the WTO against the imposition of

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

anti-dumping duty by USA. In regard to the safeguard investigation a pre-hearing brief on remedy *inter-alia* containing certain suggestions including recommendation of a country specific quota for India has been submitted to the concerned US authorities on behalf of Government of India.

Revival of Salem Steel Plant

2112. SHRI GAYA SINGH :

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to seek private investment for revival of Salem Steel Plant; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) and (b) To make Salem Steel Plant (SSP) viable, SAIL has been exploring the possibility of a Joint Venture (JV) for SSP. The JV partner is expected to be able to invest the required funds for making SSP viable. At present, SAIL is in the process of selection of such a partner.

Retrenchment of Sail Employees

†2113. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI :

SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN' :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the employees of Steel Authority of India are being continuously retrenched for the last three years; and

(b) if so, the number of employees working in all the units of Steel Authority of India during March, 1998 and during March, 2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) The number of employees working in SAIL in March 1998 was 176147 and in March 2001 was 156719. This reduction in number is the result of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) of the company.

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.